leave incentive, though they were cognizant of the possible consequences. Report language accompanying the new statute indicate that Congress believed that ''without an incentive to save sick leave, the use of sick leave may increase substantially.''

The ''FERS Sick Leave Equity Act'' will reverse the growing trend of using sick leave by providing the same benefit to FERS retirees that CSRS retirees currently receive. Under the proposal, all FERS-eligible employees will add their accrued sick leave to the years of service that employee has worked in the Federal Government. These years of service are part of the FERS retirement benefits calculation, providing a real incentive to accrue as much sick leave as possible.

The proposal has gained widespread endorsement by Federal employees who know the problem firsthand: the managers who experience the problem every day and the organizations that know the negative effect of the ''use-it or lose-it'' policy. The supporting organizations include the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), American Foreign Service Association (AFSA), American Postal Workers Union (APWU), FAA Managers Association (FAAMA), Federal Managers Association (FMA), Federally Employed Women (FEW), Government Managers Coalition (GMC), Senior Executives Association (SEA), National Council of Social Security Management Associations (NCSSMA), Professional Managers Association (PMA), National Association of Government Employees (NAGE), National Association of Postal Supervisors (NAPS), National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE), National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE), National Rural Letter Carriers Association (NRLCA), and the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU). I am proud and grateful to have this support for the proposal.

Madam Speaker, we need to incentivize the accrual of sick leave, not to keep a policy in place that encourages people to call in sick in the weeks leading up to retirement. It will save the Federal Government millions while providing sick leave parity for FERS employees and their CSRS counterparts. I look forward to working with the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and the full House of Representatives on this pressing issue.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CHESAPEAKE GATEWAYS AND WATERFALLS NETWORK REAUTHORIZATION

HON. JOHN P. SARBANES

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2009

Mr. SARBANES. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation to reauthorize the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network (CBGN), a program that connects those who live in the Bay watershed to the natural, cultural and historic resources of the Bay and thereby encourages individual stewardship of these resources.

The legislation I am introducing today is identical to the bill that passed the House of Representatives by an overwhelming and bipartisan vote of 321 to 86 during the 110th Congress. Unfortunately, we were not able to get the bill to the President's desk but I am hopeful that we will complete our work on this legislation during the 111th Congress.

Since 2000, Gateways has grown to include more than 150 sites and over 1500 miles of established and developing water trails in six states and the District of Columbia. Through grants to parks, volunteer groups, wildlife refuges, historic sites, museums, and water trails, the Network ties these sites together to provide meaningful experiences and foster citizen stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay.

Madam Speaker, for a very modest investment, the Gateways program helps foster the citizen stewardship that will be necessary to advance Bay cleanup and maintain the gains we hope to make in the coming years. By reauthorizing the Gateways program and providing access to the beautiful sites that make up the network, we can help develop the next generation of environmental stewards, which is one of the best ways to truly ''Save the Bay.'' I hope that my colleagues will support this legislation so the Park Service can continue to play a key role in the Bay cleanup effort.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA LEGISLATIVE AUTONOMY ACT OF 2009

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2009

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, last week, I introduced the District of Columbia Budget Autonomy Act. Today, I am introducing its fraternal twin, the District of Columbia Legislative Autonomy Act of 2009, to end discriminatory and unnecessary congressional review of District of Columbia legislation. I introduce these bills in sequence because Congress makes a mockery of self-government when it denies the citizens of the nation's capital the right to enact a local budget, as well as civil and criminal laws, free from interference.

In 2007, this bill was passed by the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and the Budget Autonomy bill was cleared by the subcommittee on Federal Workforce, Postal Service and District of Columbia that year as well. However, I decided to delay taking these bills to the floor because of threatened debilitating amendments and possible difficulties getting President Bush to sign these bills.

The legislative autonomy bill would eliminate the 30 day and 60 day congressional review period for civil and criminal bills, respectively. Because the period of Congressional review involves only days when Congress is in session, not ordinary calendar days, bills signed by the mayor laws typically do not become law for months. A required hold on all D.C. bills forces the D.C. City Council to pass most legislation using a cumbersome and complicated process in which bills are passed concurrently on an emergency, temporary, and permanent basis to ensure that the operations of this large and rapidly changing city continue uninterrupted. Because of the complications and timeframes involved, some bills do not become law at all. The Legislative Autonomy Act would eliminate the need for the D.C. City Council to engage in this Byzantine process.

The current law is an obsolete, demeaning, and cumbersome mechanism, which Congress no longer uses, and seldom used in the past. Yet, the D.C. City Council continues to be bound by Section 602 of the Home Rule Act, and therefore continues to abide by its awkward and debilitating rules. Our bill would do no more than align D.C. City Council and congressional practices. Instead of the cumbersome formal filing of disapproval resolutions that require processing in the House and the Senate, the Congress has preferred to use appropriations attachments. It is particularly unfair to require the D.C. City Council to engage in the tortuous process prescribed by the Home Rule Act that Congress itself has discarded. My bill would eliminate the formal review system that long ago died of old age and disuse. Congress has walked away from the layover review and should allow the city to do the same.

Today's bill, of course, does not prevent review of District laws by Congress. Under Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution, the House and the Senate could scrutinize every piece of legislation passed by the D.C. City Council, if desired, and could change or strike such legislation under its plenary constitutional authority over the District. However, since the Home Rule Act became effective in 1974, of the more than 2,000 legislative acts that have been passed by the D.C. City Council and signed into law by the Mayor, only three resolutions to disapprove of a D.C. bill have been enacted, and two of these involved a distinct federal interest. Placing a hold on our 2,000 D.C. bills has not only proved unnecessary, but has meant untold wasted costs in terms of money, staff and time to the District and the Congress. Although 36 years of Home Rule Act history shows that congressional review is unnecessary, this bill merely eliminates the automatic hold placed on local legislation and the need for the D.C. City Council to use a phantom process passed for the convenience of Congress, but one that Congress has eliminated in all but law.

Congress continually urges the District government to pursue efficiency and savings. It is time for Congress to do its part to promote greater efficiency, both here and in the District, by streamlining its own redundant and discarded review processes. Eliminating the hold on D.C. legislation would not only save scarce D.C. taxpayer revenue, but would benefit the city's bond rating, which is affected by the shadow of congressional review that delays the finality of District legislation. At the same time, Congress would not give up any of its plenary power because the Congress may intervene into any District matter at any time under the Constitution.

The limited legislative autonomy granted in this bill would allow the District to realize the greater measure of meaningful self-government and Home Rule it deserves and has more than earned in the 36 years since the Home Rule Act became effective. I urge my colleagues to pass this important measure.

HONORING ALISHA YOUNG, YOUTHBUILD LEADER

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2009

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, today I wish to recognize a dedicated and committed